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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8466
INFO RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 1158
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0349
RHEHAAA/WHITEHOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2016

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SUBJECT: ONDCP DIRECTOR WALTERS AND INL A/S PATTERSON MEET
AFGHAN CN MINISTER

Classified By: Classified By: PolMinCouns Maura Connelly for reasons 1.
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11. (C) SUMMARY: ONDCP Director Walters and INL A/S Patterson met August 9 in London with Afghanistan,s Counter Narcotics (CN) Minister Habibullah Qaderi. The Minister said Afghanistan's CN Strategy is good but needs to be implemented fully; he agreed that more needs to be done on public outreach. Qaderi said this planting season will determine whether ground eradication is sufficient: if poppy production increases significantly, it will be time to consider other options. Walters and Patterson stressed the need to show progress given the enormous costs of CN efforts to date. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Director Walters and INL A/S Patterson met August 9 in London with Afghanistan,s Counter Narcotics (CN) Minister Habibullah Qaderi. The Minister,s spokesman Zulmay Afzaly sat in, as did Brian Blake and Gerard Burns of ONDCP, Gina Costante of the U.S.-UK Joint Narcotics Analysis Center, and Poloff (notetaker). The meeting was scheduled for thirty minutes but lasted a full hour. Qaderi affirmed that Afghanistan,s CN Strategy is good but needs to be implemented fully, and said President Karzai now shares this view. The CN Strategy needs the full support of all ministries and international partners; Qaderi has sometimes considered quitting because he did not feel he had that support. In his view, the CN challenge has three main factors:

- External: The Pakistani border is open, Lashkar-e-Tayiba is training Afghans in Pakistan, and the Taliban live in Pakistan and conduct cross-border operations. Qaderi said he did not know to what extent the Government of Pakistan might be involved.

- Economy: There are not enough jobs (the Iranian embassy is swamped with visa-applicants) and the infrastructure needed to revive the economy is still lacking. Qaderi agreed with Walters that the concept of "alternative livelihoods" does

not involve some other crop that can directly substitute for opium poppy, as none exists; rather, it means enabling farmers to make a living, which is what rural development is all about. Roads are a huge factor for development, the Minister said: in Farah province, road construction led to farmers being able to earn five times as much for their watermelons. Qaderi also cited the need for investment in agriculture and animal husbandry, access to credit for farmers, and water and electricity projects.

- Corruption: The GOA lacks the institutional capacity to tackle the huge corruption problem. Yet steps are being taken: 85 police chiefs have been sacked, and the Minister expects five governors to be sacked soon and the other 29 "changed."

13. (C) Qaderi highlighted two other factors crucial to CN success:

- Public outreach: he agreed with Director Walters that talking to the population is key, and that President Karzai and his ministers need to get out more despite the security risks. The Minister perceived that due to public outreach, this year's eradication program had met with less popular resistance than last year's, despite covering three times the area (15,000 hectares vs. 5,000).

- Mainstreaming CN: all ministries need to see CN as their responsibility, and the international community needs to convey its strong support continually. All government projects should include CN messages in their public outreach.

14. (C) Eradication: Qaderi assessed that eradication was

"very good" this year, and that surveys show it is deterring farmers from planting opium poppy. He insisted that this planting season will determine whether ground eradication is sufficient: if poppy production rises significantly, it will be time to review our strategy and consider other options. He was adamant that the governors must be the primary channel for eradication, with the Central Eradication Force as their backup, but asked that funding be directed through his ministry - otherwise he loses influence. He credited governors with 13,000 of the 15,000 hectares of poppy eradicated this year.

15. (C) CN Ministry: Regarding his own ministry, Qaderi said it had made progress but still has a long way to go. The CN Trust Fund has 35 million dollars, of which 10 million has been committed to some 15,000 projects. Prosecutors and judges are moving to a new facility. It is important to go after the "big fish"; new legislation is needed on money-laundering and asset forfeiture, but even with that, the GOA lacks the tools to put the major dealers out of business. The new law on wiretapping helps, but the biggest impact would come from credibly threatening the property and money of the major dealers.

16. (C) Amnesty: On the issue of amnesty, the Minister said that is a question for Parliament to decide. It could include some formula for partial return to the state of ill-gotten gains. Some dealers are signaling their desire to go straight and invest in Afghanistan, he said. Even a few asset seizures would send a strong signal, but the GOA needs to show it is acting in a balanced way, not just picking on specific individuals.

17. (C) Need To Show Progress: Walters and Patterson stressed the need to show progress in Afghan CN, given the enormous cost of efforts to date. The Minister said that we should wait for this year's final statistics before setting a goal for next year. He remarked that the 19,000 dollars per hectare that the U.S. has spent on CN in Afghanistan is equivalent to twice the cost of the land itself. If we gave farmers 1,000 dollars per hectare rather than the current 60, that would make a huge impact. He politely suggested that the U.S. approach was unnecessarily heavy and expensive, noting that he had personally talked Dyncorp down from 700

persons on a project to 125.

8.(U) ONDCP Director Walters and INL A/S Patterson cleared on this cable in draft.

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